

Issue Two Dec. 87

THE GRUPPNER PRESS SURGE

BEN VAUGHN

the official
Newsletter of
KMUW's
AFTERNOON
MIDNIGHT

Inside:
- reviews
- Gordon Gano
Interview
- Playlist

FREE





A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hi.

Lots of stuff to talk about. I'll try to make it short.

First, thanks to you who gave us money and merchandise this November for the pledge drive. The station added almost \$30,000.00 to the coffers and over \$1,000.00 of that came from After Midnight listeners. Trust me, that's good. Your support is not only appreciated, it's necessary.

Next, send us things: photos, news, art, reviews, concert info ect. I'd like to print some stupid letters too, so keep 'em coming in.

And finally. It's not a rumor. It's true. As of January 1st, the Sister Midnight show will no longer be heard between 11:00pm and 12:00am on Saturdays. Instead, please wait until midnight for alternative programming once again on Saturday Nights. At that time a new show, The Midnight Hour, will air until 1:00am. Sabina will then entertain you as usual. A change in KMWU programming is scheduled for the early evening on Saturdays and all shows following it will be pushed up, thus the gobbling up of Sister Midnight. The Sister Midnight show was a creative, often bizarre look at local and national music. I expect that Joel will have similar fare to offer on the Midnight Hour. Still, I'm truly sad to see that extra hour go. To the After Midnight staff it meant alot more than 60 minutes of programming. It was our answer to the oft-asked question, "Why aren't you on before midnight?" It was also our little victory in the war against dull rock programming. We were proud of that hour.

Marching forward, tune in the Midnight Hour. Maybe Sunday night would be better for early alternative programming. What do you think? Hoppin' holidays to you.

--Teri Mott
Music Director
After Midnight
KMWU



THANKS TO:

JOEL SANDERSON FOR ART DIRECTION AND GROOVEY LAYOUT

KIRBY'S
SECOND TIME AROUND
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS AND WRITERS-
CHERYL BURKE PETE STUDDTMANN
TIM GILBERT ART GRIEG
JAKE EUKER KEVIN MEAD
HENRY NELSON BILL COVINGTON

PHOTOS of BEN VAUGHN by

HENRY NELSON copyright 1987

Some cartoons borrowed
from the "SUB-GENIUS"

Our Address: Gopher Purge Press c/o KMWU- 3317e. 17th,
Wichita, KS 67208



News
from

stereo • 89.1 fm

kmuw

The Wichita State University
3317 E. 17th Street
Wichita, Kansas 67208
Phone (316) 682-5737

NOVEMBER PLAYLIST

- (*) 1. Fetchin' Bones -- Galaxy 500 -- Capitol
- (*) 2. Game Theory -- Lolita Nation -- Enigma
- (10) 3. Flaming Lips -- Oh My Gaud...!!! -- Restless
- (36) 4. Mercy Seat -- The Mercy Seat -- Slash
- (*) 5. Brian Ritchie -- The Blend -- SST
- (16) 6. Meat Puppets -- Huevos -- SST
- (*) 7. Government Issue -- You -- Giant
- (1) 8. Big Dipper -- Heavens -- Homestead
- (*) 9. Leather Nun -- Force of Habit -- I.R.S.
- (4) 10. Balancing Act -- Three Squares and a Roof -- Primitive Man
- (38) 11. Eugene Chadbourne -- Vermin of the Blues -- Fundamental
- (*) 12. Cindy Lee Berryhill -- Who Will Save The World? -- Rhino
- (*) 13. Screaming Blue Messiahs -- Bikini Red -- Elektra
- (*) 14. Tim Gilbert -- Mr. Drink/Cassette -- Local
- (23) 15. Angst -- Mystery Spot -- SST
- (9) 16. Volcano Suns -- Bumper Crop -- Homestead
- (-) 17. Red Hot Chili Peppers -- Uplift Mofo Party Plan -- EMI/Manhattan
- (5) 18. Big Black -- Songs About ***** -- Touch & Go
- (-) 19. Gene Loves Jezebel -- House of Dolls -- Geffen
- (7) 20. Richard Lloyd -- Real Time -- Celluloid
- (*) 21. These Immortal Souls -- Get Lost (don't lie) -- SST
- (22) 22. Barrence Whitfield & The Savages -- Call of the Wild -- Rounder
- (*) 23. Reviers -- Saturday -- Capitol
- (*) 24. Rhenyard's Grin -- Dust Devils -- Fundamental
- (29) 25. Leaving Trains -- **** -- SST
- (*) 26. Screaming for Emily -- Scriptures -- Permanent Rave
- (*) 27. Legendary Pink Dots -- Stone Circles -- Play It Again Sam
- (*) 28. Various -- Dogs in Space Soundtrack -- Atlantic
- (*) 29. Naked Prey -- 40 Miles From Nowhere -- Frontier
- (15) 30. Jane's Addiction -- Jane's Addiction -- Triple X
- (-) 31. Various -- I Was A Teenage Zombie -- Enigma
- (*) 32. Young Fresh Fellows -- Refreshments -- Frontier
- (*) 33. Thin White Rope -- Bottom Feeders -- Frontier
- (*) 34. Bedlam Hour -- Rock the Cradle -- Positive Force
- (31) 35. Chris Stamey -- It's Alright -- A & M
- (*) 36. Elvis Costello -- Out of the Idiot -- Demon
- (*) 37. They Might Be Giants -- EP -- Bar None
- (*) 38. Yo La Tengo -- New Wave Hotdogs -- Coyote/Twin Tone
- (3) 39. Ben Vaughn -- Beautiful Thing -- Restless
- (8) 40. Alex Chilton -- High Priest -- Big Time



NEW AND UPCOMING RELEASES

- Dinosaur Jr. - EP - SST
- Cassandra Complex - Fundamental
- Defenestration - Dali Does Windows - Relativity
- Great Plains - Sum Things Up - Homestead
- Camper Van Chadbourne - Fundamental
- Various - Big Time Syndrome - Big Time
- They Might Be Giants - EP - Bar None
- Ritual Tension - The Blood of the Kid - Celluloid
- Doctors Mob - Sophomore Slump - Relativity
- Silos - Tennessee Fire - ILA
- Various - Straight to Hell Soundtrack - Enigma
- HR - Human Rights - SST
- David Rudder, Charlies Roots - This is Soca - Sire
- Elvis Costello - Out of our Idiot - Demon
- Jonathan Richman and the Modern Lovers - Modern Lovers
- Breaking Circus - Smoker's Paradise - Homestead
- Live Skull - Dusted - Homestead
- Big Dipper - 12" - Homestead
- Verlaines - Bird Dog - Homestead
- Sonic Youth - Master Dik EP - SST
- Doug Orton - Richard Brautigan's Body - Gene Pool
- Various - Discpan Hands - Rave
- Gun Club - Mother Juno - Fundamental

SHOWS TO SEE

- SLEEPY LA BEEF & THE RYTHM RANGERS *Dec. 11* Coyote Club
- GRAVELTONES & TAILGATORS *Dec. 12* Coyote Club
- HOMESTEAD GRAYS *Dec. 17&18* Jazzhouse-Lawrence
- BLIVETS *Dec. 27* Coyote Club
- SAX MANIACS & GRAVELTONES *Jan. 1&2* Coyote Club
- ANGST *Jan. 11* Kansas City (tentative)

All shows subject to cancellation ect. so call ahead before driving 350 miles.
Add to this list. Send us your concert dates by the 1st of every month.

Igloos of the Southwest



INTERVIEW



It's Halloween. The Ben Vaughn Combo is getting ready to play an acoustic set for the dozen or so eager followers gathered at Second Time Around records. I'm dressed like a cat. Ben Vaughn is feeling talkative. He's playing the Coyote tonight. He's got a new album. What more could he ask for? Life's a "Beautiful Thing."

GP: I hear you guys rented a house in Lawrence...

BV: In fact, we just left there today. We rented a house on Kentucky street for the whole month of October. We did that so we could base ourselves in the mid-west in a centralized location. So we could play most cities twice or maybe three times within a month, which is something most east coast bands can't do. We wanted to make it easy to come back repeatedly and build up a following.

GP: It's worked.

BV: Actually our first show ever here (Wichita) was great too. We played on a Sunday night, two sets at the Coyote, and the place was really crowded. That's excellent for being on the road. It's different now because people really know who we are. Before, touring was like... you wonder why you're doing it sometimes. You show up and nobody's there.

GP: Your music seems to draw from a lot of sources.

BV: We're a rarity in that we are able to draw more

of a cross section when we play. We don't appeal just to college radio audiences or just alternative music fans or just people who read fanzines. We also appeal to people who just work all week and go out for a beer. We're not specialized entertainment.

GP: Do you like playing the mid-west?

BV: I love it. It's great. It's not so different from where we live except there's more space. Everything's spread out, the air's cleaner. Other than that I live in South Jersey which is either all industrial or farm country and some suburbs. It's very similar to this area. Except, you know, the streets are narrower. I like the mid-west a whole lot. We came here for a reason you know, we came here to hang out.

GP: Gus, your accordion player, is he from Wichita?

BV: Not exactly from Wichita, but he lived here enough years to be from here. He lived here seven or eight years.

GP: He was in the Buckthrusters, wasn't he?

BV: Yes, he was in the Buckthrusters and he hung around with the Embarrassment and I think, ran sound for them when the other guy couldn't. He was involved in the Buckthrusters, New Wave Brothers, bands like that.

GP: How did you guys get together?

BV: Well, simply, the Morells, from Springfield, Missouri. They were a big mid-west band. I was friends with them and they were doing a lot of my songs. They came up to New York and did a lot of shows and I sang with them and everybody started asking me to play their clubs. I didn't have a band. One club, Folk City, convinced me to play as a solo artist, acoustic, and I didn't want to do that, it was too scary. So I got Lonesome Bob to play snaredrum with me. We called ourselves the Ben Vaughn Combo because we figured it sounded like a group. We could charge more money. We did that show and it got written up in the

New York Times. So I was on my way and I didn't even know how it happened. Then Aldo joined on upright bass, and Gus joined on accordion. We were acoustic for about a year which you'll see today. We're a little rusty now but we were acoustic our whole first year. We used to play on streetcorners 'cause we couldn't get booked in Philadelphia. We just gradually added electric instruments because our songwriting was starting to outgrow the instrumentation we had. I grew up playing electric rock and roll. Acoustic was uh... I was a latent folkie.

GP: Did you ever make a record or cassette when you were acoustic?

BV: Some things are going to be coming out on a flexi-disc in France; a version of my first band doing one of my songs acoustic on a radio show.

GP: Why France?

BV: We're real big in France. Honest to God, we're gonna be going over to Europe, I believe, in February. We're working on it now. France and Italy we're really popular.

GP: How did that happen?

BV: Our records have been available there since the beginning. They just listened to them, I guess and liked 'em. And the new album has Jerry Lewis in France. It's a single that's coming out in Europe with "She's a Real Scream" on the back. It's coming out soon or may even be out. Everyone says, you guys go over there, they'll love you. We've been getting playlists from Radio France. We're number 7.

GP: Is touring fun?

BV: It's great. It's tough being away from home. We're on a ten week tour. We've got five more weeks to go.

GP: What have you really enjoyed about this tour?

BV: Art Busch's grandmother. She runs the motel next to the Coyote Club. She's 94 years old. She is an amazing woman. I'm really looking forward to hanging out with her tonight. I sat in the lobby and talked to her right up

until we went on last time. She said, "Why don't you take a nap young man? You look tired." She let me take a nap in this chair. And I hung out and talked to her.

We've explored most of the cities we've been to. Went to a Cubs' game at Wrigley Field. Saw the Royals in Kansas City. We've got a great group of guys. Nobody's really into the rock star thing- drinking and partying. Those guys like to drink beer. I don't drink at all. I don't do anything. I'm 100% straight. Everybody's good sports. We have a good time. And out of six people, the band, the driver and the soundman, nobody smokes. I used to smoke and so did our drummer and so did Gus. We all quit the same day. Two years ago. We just had our second anniversary.

GP: Did you write all the songs on both LPs?

BV: On the first one, everything by me. Second LP we do a cover, but it's not really a cover, cause it's the first recorded version of this song to ever exist. It's written by Dan Marcus who's a friend of mine. He wrote "Growin' a Beard" that the Morells used to do. We're like, writers who hang out together. He's got a job and I don't. That's why I beat him to it. If he didn't have a job, he'd probably have it recorded by now.

GP: Of your songs, what is your favorite?

BV: I always get songs confused with the way the recordings came out. It's tough when you produce yourself. Which I'm doing now. The new LP I produced myself. I think "Shing-a-ling with Me" came out the best. I'm not sure if that's my favorite song as it's written, but it sure came out nice. I heard it again the other day. I think "Lover's Leap" is my most complex lyric. I think I crammed a whole lot into the three minutes in that one. "Brenda Lee" of course I'm real proud of.

GP: What's your favorite song of all time?

BV: "Wooly Booly" is right up there. Now were talking about records. I have a whole mess of favorites. One day you ask me, it might be "Wooly Booly" and the next day it might be "Love is All Around" by the Troggs. Songs I heard as a young kid, that made me want to do



this are the one's I'd pick if I had to make a top ten or something. The one's that never leave you.

"Satisfaction" blew my mind. I was ten years old and it blew my mind. I never got over how great that record was. It knocked me out. So did "There Is" by the Dells. Philadelphia radio was basically soul radio. There were a lot of soul acts: the Intruders, the Delphonics, the O'Jays and Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes. All that stuff is what I grew up on. So a lot of songs that really influenced me and when I hear them I actually feel that emotion-you know-a lot of them are soul.

GP: Does Bob really play a '69 Rambler hubcap?

BV: Oh yeah.

GP: Was that off your car?

BV: Yeah, there's three more left.

GP: Do you still drive a '69 Rambler?

BV: I used to. Unfortunately that car got towed, impounded. That fee has exceeded the actual amount that I paid for the car to begin with. The good news is I bought a '66 Rambler American Wagon. For 300 bucks. The front cover of our new album, I'm sitting on the tailgate of it.

GP: Will you ever get your '69 out of hock?

BV: I think it's probably been destroyed by now. But I am going to get a fleet of Ramblers and I'm gonna get all my friends to drive them. Then we'll go down the highway in a V formation like the Hell's Angel's. Threaten people on the road with Ramblers.

CONT...

GP: Who are the Giant Slugs Horn Section?

BV: They're just two guys from Philadelphia who came up and introduced themselves to me. They said "You need horns" and I said "Yeah? Prove it to me." They jammed with us one night and were really good and funny guys, too. They're on three or four songs on our album.

GP: How do you feel about the music industry today?

BV: I hope the big drum sound goes away. I think that even kids are getting tired of it. Frank Zappa said something really good in an interview recent-

ly. I don't really follow what Zappa's doing musically that much anymore. I've lost interest. But he still gives a good interview. He said, when kids go out and buy a drum, a snare drum, and they take it home and hit it with a stick, they're really disappointed. It doesn't sound like what they thought it was gonna sound like. It's a shame and I'm just sick and tired of hearing it. Even Eric Clapton, you put on an Eric Clapton record and there's that drum sound. It's too much of a sonic blast. There's rules in the marketplace and this is the new rule. It's a shame that that's how things are. Even alternative bands use the big drum sound now. It's bumming me out. I made my album purposely with a very modest sound. I've gotten complaints from people about it sounding small. I thank them. That's what I wanted. I wanted a good, modest, real, sincere record instead of the big drum sound. I hope that leaves us.



Blind Fred the Pole Vaulter had no idea that
Some one had replaced his pole with a very large
Stork leg. He raced onward, unaware ...

by
Jy

What bugs me about it is, if you want to get a hit now, you've got to do it. A record won't even be considered to be worth the promotion at a label unless it sounds like other records. That's why I chose an independent label. We've been to the major labels, talking to them all. They've all said, "Accordian is great, but..." I'm not gonna change. I don't care. I'm doing this because I want to. I really care about music to the point where I may make some naive business moves, because of the lack of integrity in certain things that are offered. I'm really happy with Restless. I tell them that every day on the phone. They say, tell the interviewers that.

GP: What do you see in the Combo's future?

BV: Another album, touring Europe. I've been writing and writing and writing. I have about three more albums worth of material we haven't even tapped into yet. I guess what's in the future is me pulling my hair out trying to decide which 12 songs to record next. There are some tasks that I've kinda dug myself a hole... I manage the band too, so I'm very busy. We used to have a manager. We don't anymore. We split with him, so I manage the band.

GP: Do things work out better that way?

BV: They do. They work out great. Only I know what's appropriate and inappropriate, that's the problem I was having with my ex-manager. He used what he thought were the best tactics. I like to break the rules. A lot. I think I'm smart

enough to know when someone's pulling a snow-job on me. I can hold my own. But it's awful, awful busy. Playing and writing and producing and also managing is just nuts. I used to practice guitar a couple of hours a day and I don't do that anymore because of this.

I see things just getting better for us now. After we finish this tour up and we're home for Christmas, I'm gonna sit back and realize what work we've done. Right now it's just day to day, getting it done, keep it going. I'll probably pull the covers over my head.

--Teri Mott

30-million toy trucks were bought in the U.S. in 1966.

Fin

ALBUM REVIEWS

THIN WHITE ROPE
BOTTOM FEEDERS
FRONTIER

We live in an apartment full of people, a dumb cat and a mean cat. The dumb cat became pregnant, (I plead the fifth) and gave birth to smaller wet cats. The mean cat would like nothing more than to eat our new arrivals. We people arrange the apartmental occurrences with kitten-eating avoidance as our primary concern. This annoys the mean cat who waits, impatiently next to the closed door that separates it from those moist, crunchy, little tidbits it craves so dearly. Oh, if only it had evolved to the doorknob turning stage the mean cat would really have a good time. I bring this to your attention in order to give you some idea of the anticipation with which I awaited the new Thin White Rope e.p. Granted, I wasn't crouching near our front door any more than I usually do and the record contains next to no nutritional value but I enjoyed it's arrival nonetheless and listening to it didn't leave me coughing up fur balls.

If you've been fortunate enough to witness this band at either of their live shows in town or listened to their previous two albums, you probably realize that they fall somewhere between the West coast cowboy hat bands and the East coast feedback folks. If this seems vague, I apologize but it's been typed and I'll be damned if I'm going back to the beginning and relive that immaterial cat drivel. Let's try this. Thin White Rope songs can place you in the desert, parch your lips, cover you in dust and leave you smelling awful. Add to this the fact that you are also dragging your toxically nauseous horse behind you and are moving very slowly to nowhere in particular. And it's night.

Bottom Feeders (they're fish so get that image of brown lips out of your head) contains four originals and covers of Jimmy Reed's "Ain't That Lovin' You Baby" and Suicide's "Rocket U.S.A." Of the originals "Macy's Window" stands out as one from rubber world with a guitar line that resembles someone nervously playing a saw with a mallet. The Suicide cover was recorded live and contains some of the best "your guitar is too close to your amplifier" beauty heard since Karl Precoda forgot how to make gravity work and floated out of the Dream Syndicate and out of our atmosphere forever. The signature of Thin White Rope's sound lies within singer Guy Kyser's neck. His deep disturbing quaver sounds not unlike a man singing into a fishbowl of pudding. In a perfect world Guy would have sung the Love Boat theme and Fred Grandy would have jumped overboard somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle. Instead, Jack Jones did and Fred's a United States congressman.

For those still "wet behind their eyyyyeeerrrrs" about this band, I highly recommend their last album Moonhead. The desired trancelike effect is much more conducive to a long player. Bottom Feeders is a very fine between-albums release, however and well worth any ill gotten gain you may have lying around. Now if you'll excuse me, Firehose has a new album due out soon and I have some crouching to attend to.

--Kevin Mead

ALTERNATIVE MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS

If you're anything like me, and I am, the very last thing you want to do in twenty degree weather is to jump start your car, probably with a hangover, and drive around making preparations for a merry little Christmas. If hearing a Muzak version of "Silver Bells" in a mall makes you, too, turn green and red against your will, then you, like me, might be interested in hearing what I call Alternative Music for Christmas. I haven't selected this music for it's Christmas topicality. I have looked instead for that music which I have found most effective in curing "Jingle Bells" and nipping the Christmas Spirit in the bud. In their own way, all of these selections are excellent, if diverse, with a high noise content as the common denominator. My advise for this Christmas: stay home, curl up in front of an uncontained fire, and play a couple of these records, loud.

* BERLIN-Lou Reed-By the time the children begin wailing "Mommy" on "The Kids" you should be firmly established in what could be properly be termed an anti-Christmas mood. This is the most depressing track; at its most cheerful Berlin is every bit as upbeat as, say, "Shoah" or 1984. I would have included Lou Reed's double L.P. Machine Metal Music as well, but I'm trying to cut down.

* MODERN DANCES-Jandek-This L.P. isn't so much depressing as it is ludicrous, and while you're likely to hear a lot of ludicrous music around Christmas, this thing almost seems intentional. (You may have heard "Painted My Teeth" on After Midnight, in which case you'll know what I mean.) Mixed, by the sound of it, some time before the invention of the wireless telegraph, the howling vocals and guitar often peak out in such a way as to create a kind of tuneless, flattened roar that you just don't get in "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

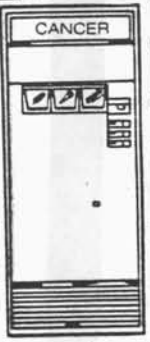
* JUNKYARD-The Birthday Party-I hear so much about peace and love this time of year that for me it's actually refreshing to hear Nick Cave say, anytime in December, that he put a 6" gold blade in the head of a girl. Those of you who are acquainted with the Birthday Party will already know that the sound is not conducive to sipping hot cider or trimming trees, but the world would be a better place this Christmas season if you would get a hold of a copy of this and tell others about it.

* ALBUM-Flipper-"(I Saw You) Shine" is my favorite cut, and the title sounds Christmassy enough, but the song itself is an eight-minute dirge that is likely to make the housepets devour their offspring without really knowing why. Sample lyrics: "Show me your pain/ Your pain makes me burn." And remember that this is all really slow. Also includes the hits "Sex Bomb" and "Life is Cheap," two tracks that I don't have the energy to describe right now.

*-NO NEW YORK-Various Artists-This compilation, featuring Mars, D.N.A., James Chance, and Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, is the unholy spawn of producer Brian Eno and the island of Manhattan. You wouldn't want to make the mistake of confusing it with Eno's ambient music, but if you did you'd only make it once and the dinner party would be ruined anyway. Features, among other offences, the vocals of Lydia Lunch and Arto Lindsay; they sound better than ever to me this time of year.

--Jake Euker

CONT.



Before I get down to business, I'd like to remind everyone that I am reviewing "Independent" tapes. I realize that these are vague terms but usually "Independent" means cassette projects that were produced by the artist or someone distributing for them and just about always on a limited budget in spare time. If your tapes qualify send them to me c/o Kmuw-3317 E. 17th St., Wichita, Ks. 67208.

SLAVE CAVE GGE RECORDS

Slave Cave is a four-piece band recorded at The Clubhouse in Akron, Ohio in March of 1987. Now I really don't like taking tapes apart song by song and this one is not a good one to dissect like that. All the songs sound like Slave Cave doing what they do. The band has a style both old and new. This is not speed metal or thrash but it sure isn't lacking in power. The songs are not fast grind but are very strong just the same and at times remind me of the late 60's and early 70's style of power rock with bands like Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. Still, Slave Cave isn't an oldie-moldy copy band. There is enough life in what they do to make it new and real. Yes, they do cover two songs on the tape that could be labeled as a cop-out by another band but I really like their versions of Neil Young's "Ohio" and Marc Bolan's "The Slider."

In all, this is some straight forward, almost garage band rock and roll done in a tradition before the age of MTV-guitar-hero-mindlessness poisoned our stereos and tvs with Flashy, Fake, Fanatic, Finger Flailers from Hell. I do want to make it clear that these guys do not sound like every other rock and roll band. Slave Cave, I'm sure would do a great and powerful show and I'll go see them if I ever get the chance. I've had more than my fill of 60-70ish copy bands and it's good to hear new talent doing original music that doesn't rely on cheap effects or speedy sleaze to bite you on the ass. This is a good tape from GGE Records who seem to be one of the few outlets for the less-than-famous people of new music who work at least as hard, if not harder than, their famous cohorts. It's good to have a company like GGE in these times of flashy music and artsy-fartsy noise from the dinosaur labels. Thanks for giving us the choice, guys. We need more of you. GGE-P.O.Box 5088, Kent, Ohio 44240.

THE BEDLAM HOUR EXPERIENCE

BEDLAM HOUR ROCK THE CRADLE POSITIVE FORCE

Last night I stumbled out of a fellow After Midnight disc jockey's apartment with a whole stack of groovy new music to review. I then proceeded to fall down a number of stairs trying to be careful not to drop the albums that I was already juggling. Somehow, when I hit the concrete at the bottom of the stairs, a different album was on top of the stack. This album was "Rock the Cradle" by Bedlam Hour-Thank God for that accident, for when I put that record on my turntable and cranked it on, my eardrums nearly melted with delight. This was no ordinary hard-core band-no, no, no-this was a phenomenon. Something to be experienced.

Never before have I heard any band that combines so many types of music into each song. For instance, imagine the intensity of The Butthole Surfers, the melodic tone of the Rhythm Pigs, the vocal range of the Replacements and the tightness of Rush all combined into one sound. It was almost too much to contend with. Luckily I had a friend to call up and share this new power with. Unluckily, she wasn't home. I had to make due with slamming myself into inanimate objects around my home.

Sometime later, as I lay exhausted from pounding my head into the floor while listening to the songs "Bedlam Hour" and "Get Off (the Drugs) six or seven times each, my friend, who I had tried to call earlier, appeared in my room. She asked me if I had been fighting. I said nothing as I motioned towards the L.P. cover. While she admired the three studs on the back I crawled to the turntable and proceeded to cue side one. She said, "I think they're cute." In reactionary shock I dropped the needle onto a song called "Benjamin Franklin." We both reeled backward as I had forgotten to turn the amplifier down. All she could do was stare into space smiling from ear to ear. She levitated. I passed out. When I came to, the album was over and my friend was sitting in the corner repeating the same word. "Yes, yes, yes." I smiled and cued side two.

Perhaps you, too can have a similar experience. All you have to do is locate "Rock the Cradle." The rest comes naturally.

--Pete Studtmann

ACOUSTIC DOESN'T HAVE TO HURT

BALANCING ACT THREE SQUARES AND A ROOF PRIMITIVE MAN

It is usually with cynicism earned through bitter experience that I look at any album recorded with acoustic instruments. Nine times out of ten it's some group who wants to harken back to the good ol' days. Some sort of Peter, Paul and Mary deal. A kind of Joan Baez thing. Yeah. Folk music from hell. I appreciate peace, love, hard rains and magic dragons as much as the next guy but hearing those dated, insipid harmonies whining really helps one grasp an understanding of why people end up spraying automatic fire into crowded shopping malls.

There are a few notable exceptions: The Violent Femmes, before fame, fortune and teenage girls with funny haircuts came a-knockin', and The Balancing Act. They were first heard two years ago on the finely tailored (if rather short) "New Campfire Songs" and have followed it up with "Three Squares and a Roof." The production is a bit more varied on this album, with the songs utilizing sparse keyboards and unusual percussion. The music ranges from the psychedelic rave-up of "Kicking Clouds Across the Sky" to the Spanish sounding instrumental "The Governor of Pedro." The lyrics contain some pessimistic wordplay worthy of the great Costello, as in "The Ballad of Art Snyder (He stayed at home last night/ To do some soul searching/ We hope he found one.)" The one drawback is the wimpy Everly Brothers-style "Adventure," which sounds like a plea to bring our boys home from Viet Nam. It's a subject that's been run into the ground by mutants in coffee houses everywhere but considering the rest of the album, Balancing Act can be forgiven this bit of retro-activity.

By using some screaming harmonica fills and good harmonies that jangle the nerves rather than wash over you like the sweet, sticky goo Crosby, Stills and Nash spew out, Balancing Act takes every traditional folk cliché and twists it in their own original direction. If I had a hammer, I'd hammer in the daytime, I'd hammer in the nighttime, I'd hammer Suzanne Vega's brains out while screaming the lyrics to this album.

--Bill Covington

interview with

Gordon Gano

The Mercy Seat played last month at the Coyote with their rousing brand of gospel punk..Lead singer for the Violent Femmes, Gordon Gano plays guitar and sings back-up vocals for the group..Former After-Midnight, Cheryl Burke talked with Gano and bassist Pat Moran..Gano talked about his music, his religious convictions, his future plans and what he thinks will happen with the Violent Femmes.

CB: You're touring with the Mercy Seat, which means the Violent Femmes are no more?

Gano: Uh, no it doesn't mean that, it means I'm not touring with the Violent Femmes right now. (Laughs) The Femmes are in the deep freeze, their just on hold and everybody in the group is just doing different things. The one thing I would say about that though, is that people would get the impression that well, that means that if Gordon's playing with the Mercy Seat then that must be his hobby band or the kind of thing that he's doing that's not for real, like the real band or his real job or real career or etc. etc.. And, uh, anyway that's not the case, the band is not a hobby band. It's just that I happen to be in both groups.

CB: How long have you been with the Mercy Seat?

Gano: Uh, the group has been loosely together for three years with these same people. But it's only been about the last year that we've played together with regularity, going on tours and put out an album because I've been busy with another group.

CB: How do your religious convictions figure in with what you're doing now?

Gano: You know that's a difficult question to say, OK, say in one or two sentences...

CB: Have you been religious all along or was there a conversion somewhere along the way?

Gano: Probably the best answer to that is that I can't point to any one time in my life where I can say, on this day..A lot of people can say something like that. I was born and raised in a family that had and has a very strong faith and love and father was a minister. So I was brought up in that kind of environment and of course there's been changes through my own life, but I can't point to one day and say this is the day when everything changed.

CB: I'm wondering about some of the themes that were on the albums with the Violent Femmes.. Add it Up, for instance.

Gano: (Defensive) OK, well, you know what, I'd like to talk to you about that when I'm on a Femme tour. Actually I'd like to keep it a bit more...

CB: I'm getting around, I'm getting around to more questions, I'm just trying...

Gano: Is this the question of how do I justify...

CB: No, I'm choosing that as an example..

Gano: Because it seems so contrasting?

CB: Yeah it seems such a juxtaposition.

Gano: Uh-huh, yes, (Laughs) well I agree.

CB: Where does that fit in with your philosophies or for with what you're doing..

Gano: It's difficult to put some things into words. I don't have a sentence, you know, this is Gordon Gano's philosophy, boom, here it is. Uh, I have a strong belief in the validity of artistic expression in whatever form. Also Christianity is too often put in a little box and man sort of defining God and everything else. And even as far as the Bible goes, so many things are church, and that people would think all that would be from the Bible, but it isn't. There's so much which is tradition. You know a lot of tradition is very good but often a lot of problems come from things like that. So now you see, if I try to answer this question I start babbling and going off on every tangent.

CB: I'm not trying to put you on the spot.

Gano? Right, no, I didn't get that idea.

CB: I'm just really curious...

Gano: No, it's just, ummm, I don't know. I think I just started to scratch the surface with that. I just think that there is, there should be a, uh...I know what I was thinking but I can't say it, I can't think of how to say it and have it come across.

CB: Could we come back to that?

Gano: Maybe, I guess.. the thought was there for a moment.

CB: I'm not that familiar with gospel music. Have you been writing some of the music for the group?

Gano: No, and with the Mercy Seat, one thing that I enjoy so much about it is I come from a background of being the songwriter, lead singer

CONT . . .

"Where do you live?"

and in this group I'm not the lead singer. I do a lot of singing but it's all back up and I haven't written any of the songs. I like it like that. I like keeping a very separate thing. If somebody comes to a show with the Mercy Seat and after a couple of songs, yells out for some song that I wrote with the Violent Femmes, I just can't understand somebody doing that...(Pat comes in) Oh, here comes the blade...(Meaning editing)

CB: Pat's here...In a review from the L.A. weekly, and I quote, "It, meaning your music, kicks butt for Christ." What do you think about that?
Gano: I think I saw that review...that was a nice one.. I liked that.

CB: Most of what I've read is good..but what do you think of kicking butt for Christ?
Gano: I don't know if that should be like on our posters, like a campaign, we go on a national...actually that would be a way of getting more attention, I suppose. It would get more people to see us.. like how David Bowie has tours and really promotes these names..kicking butt for Christ.

CB: What kind of music have you been listening to lately.
Pat: I listen to the Cocteau Twins.

CB: So you both listen to the Cocteau Twins since you're in the same van?
Pat: No, we all have Walkmans.

CB: Oh, good idea.
Gano: Yeah, it seems like one thing about the group is that if we had our music of choice to put on between four people in the group, we have four very different things that we would all put on.

CB: Is Slash (their record label) doing a pretty good job of promoting you people?
Gano: Isn't that an unfair question? Slash is everywhere. They could be listening. I don't know, maybe you work for Slash.

CB: Would'nt I have to tell you if you asked that question?
Gano: No, it's hard to say. We've been doing a lot of interviews and they're a small operation. So it's hard to say.

CB: Do you know how the airplay has been? Has it been pretty good?
Gano: I don't know. I think we'll find out a lot more when we get out to L.A. because on this tour we haven't been out there since we've

where. They could be listening. I don't know, maybe you work for Slash.

CB: Would'nt I have to tell you if you asked that question?
Gano: No, it's hard to say. We've been doing a lot of interviews and they're a small operation. So it's hard to say.

CB: Do you know how the airplay has been? Has it been pretty good?
Gano: I don't know. I think we'll find out a lot more when we get out to L.A. because on this tour we haven't been out there since we've had an album out. We were out there a couple of times before but that was before we had any record deal or had a record out. So I think when we're out there they'll probably have all kinds of things to show us and tell us.

CB: Where did the idea for a gospel, sort of, post punk...
Gano: Oh no, neo...gotta say neo or something like that.

CB: Ok, neo. Where did you come up with that?
Gano: Zena, the lead singer, had the concept for the group. She was brought up in an environment of listening to gospel music continuously. Her mother just loves gospel music and listens to it all the time. And they were friends and considered to be family with some of the great gospel groups of the 60's and I guess the 50's. So she grew up with all that and at one point she felt so sick of it that she never wanted

to hear a gospel song ever again and got very much into the New York mid-seventies punk thing: Dead Boys, Richard Hell and all that. And then sometime after that, somehow I guess a lot of the lyrics from some of those old songs that she just had permeated into her brain from when she was a baby just started coming back to her and started to mean more to her and then she had the idea of sort of combining a lot of the energies of both those things. So the source of a lot of the songs that we do are from her mother's albums that we listen to and then play our own way. A lot of the songs are, quote, cover songs, although if somebody hired us as a cover band they'd probably be a little surprised. We rework them to where we feel they're very much our own songs.

CB: Would the band ever fit into a church environment?
Gano: Well I don't really think that's the place for the band. We've had a couple of experiences with that that weren't exactly glowing. I'm going to pass the mike over here.

CB: Could you tell me a little bit about what happened?
Pat: We played at the Green Belt Festival in North Hampton, England last summer and, for the most part I don't think we were well recieved because I don't think the people really understood what we were about. It was a sort of like a ..it was Christian music but we just didn't really fit into what the typical Christian music band was. I think we shocked a lot of people. And a lot of people just didn't take to it very well.

CB: What did they do?
Pat: Well, some people asked us very awful questions. I mean, they didn't throw tomatoes at us or anything. A lot of people did like it. But I think a lot of people, not a lot, but some people reacted very strongly, negatively to the music.

CB: Were they booing you?
Pat: On no, I think for the most part people liked it. What had happened was after a show we did interviews and there was this one journalist or interviewer who was grilling us about our personal lives which I don't think really comes into question with the music. I mean our relationship, or our faith to God is our own business and our job is to play the music and to make people enjoy it and feel as good as we do when we're on stage playing.

CB: Your tour is going to over in three weeks, what then...do you have any idea?

Gano: (Laughing) Tell 'em Pat.

Pat: Sleep.

Gano: Sleep, sleep. We will, umm, probably keep playing here and there and then when we get back to New York we will play out weekends and things like that. And then we'll take off for the holidays and just see what happens after that.

CB: Do you have any projects in mind with the Femmes?
Gano: The Mercy Seat probably doesn't have any plans with the Femmes.

CB: You personally.
Gano: Me personally? No, it's just uh...

CB: You guys are just free-floating now?
Gano: Yeah it's just, uh, yeah, I don't know.

CB: You have no idea? I was just curious.
Gano: Uh, yep, nope.

Fin



CRITICAL BLAST

S.P.K. has created controversy over content. Their latest LP is "Zamia Lehmanni"; co-"Songs of Byzantine Flowers". This is music of most intense sense of the word. Thickly layered of reversed sounds-steel bowls, pianos, voices, yards, toads and a child's swing. This is gothic. It makes you feel that something should be worship but you are unsure as to what it is. This excellent is available on RRRRecords.

Correction: the title of the H.N.A.S. LP recorded in last issue is "Im Schatten Der Mohre."

On the horizon for Wichita is the emergence of industrial noise. Featured are the solo efforts of Haug and John Eberly of the Mumbles, Tunes from Junk Food, performances by After Midnight's in Smith, Tim Gilbert of Joe's Nose and Intrinsic. Available soon from Second Time Around. Listen January for this tape's debut on the Midnight Hour.

--Art Grieg

Coming JAN. 2



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from AFTERMIDNIGHT
Your Only Alternative

KMUW 89.1

KMUW 89.1



MIDNIGHT

Hour

RADIO CYBERPUNK

JAN. 2 the leading authors in the CyberPunk movement.

INTERVIEWS WITH JOHN SHIRLEY, WILLIAM GIBSON AND BRUCE STERLING

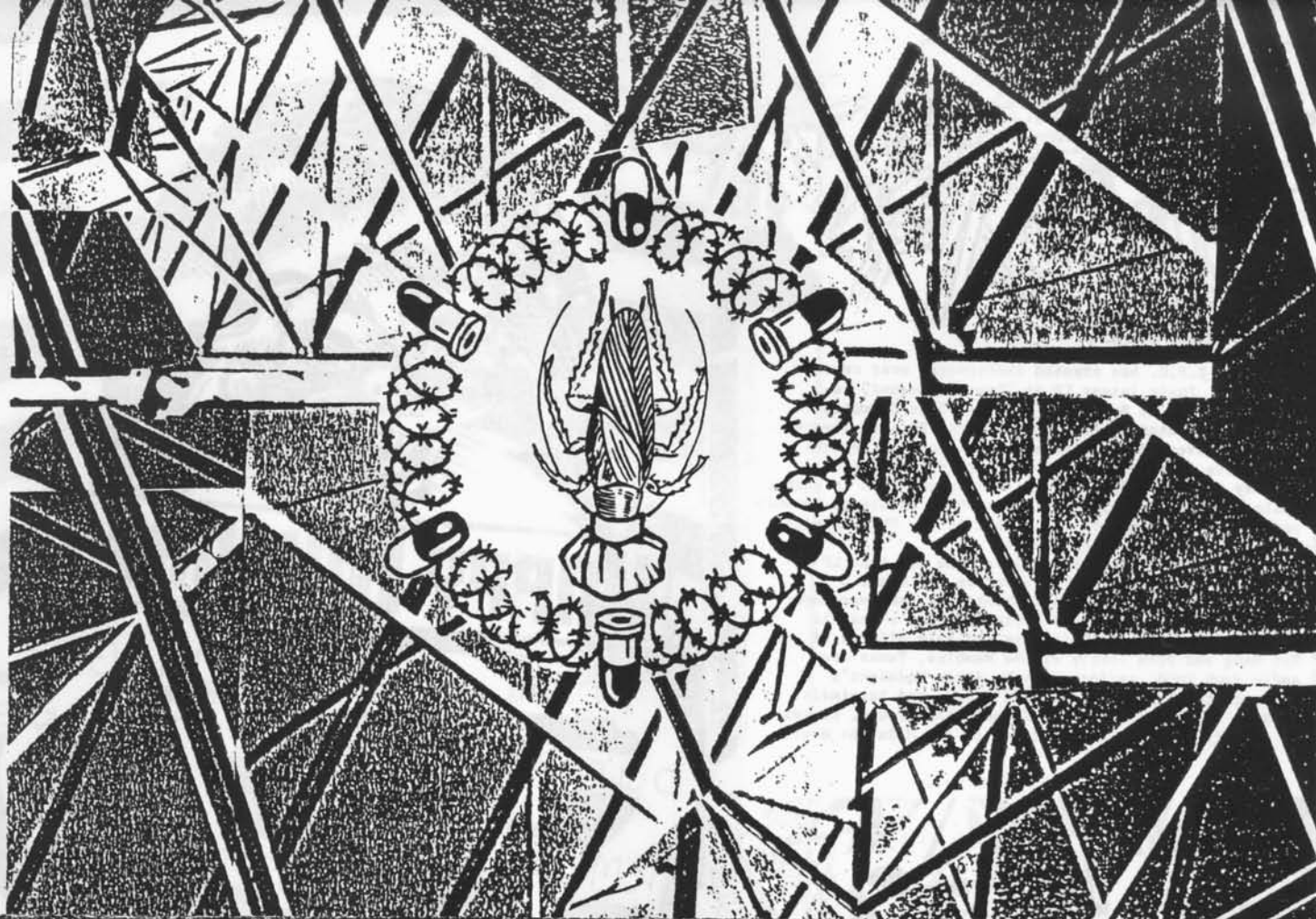
JAN. 9 "drail" (see Art Grieg's article)

JAN. 23 CLIFF MAJORS of the DEL-RAY Blues Society
Hosted by Dave Ranney of the Wichita Blues Society

JAN. 30 Kevin Smith takes a 1 Backwards Masking in Record Industry

Rock Industrial Hardcore

sch Hardcore Mental Reggae Blues



stereo • 89.1 fm

kmuw

The Wichita State University
3317 E. 17th Street
Wichita, Kansas 67208
Phone (316) 682-5737

SEND TO:

